

MIMOSA PRE-PRIMARY & FOUNDATION PHASE SCHOOL



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Mimosa Inclusivity and Diversity Policy

Mimosa is made up of a diverse community of families who believe schools should do more than simply reflect society, they should be agents of societal change. Mimosa is committed to creating an environment in which everyone can thrive regardless of their background. Mimosa seeks to anchor the diversity policy on the following principles:

a) The right of the child:

All children have rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl or identify in another way, if they are differently abled, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason – inspired by *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*¹

b) The image of the child

..by affirming the right to be recognised as a citizen of the present, we affirm and confirm the strength and extraordinary potential of the child and their right to expand and express this potential. children are “constructors of their own experience and thus active participants in the organization of their identities, abilities, and autonomy, through relationships and interaction with their peers, with adults, with ideas, with objects, and with the real and imaginary events of intercommunicating worlds”²

c) The South African Context:

South Africa is a richly diverse and multi-cultural country that has a history marred by social injustice including a legacy of discrimination and marginalisation. Given this context, it is important that a community such as Mimosa, not only understands this context but also develops a culture that embraces diversity in all its forms.

d) Reggio Emilia principles of inclusion: [How Reggio Emilia encourages inclusion]

¹ <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text-childrens-version>

² https://repozytorium.uwb.edu.pl/jspui/bitstream/11320/10608/1/MHI_19_1_2020_C_Rinaldi_The_child_as_citizen.pdf

One of the primary goals of Mimosa, as a school inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, is to ensure that every child feels **a sense of belonging** within the school community and to strengthen each child's sense of identity as an individual (Gandini, 1993a).³ Furthermore Mimosa values **participation** as a way of being which builds up the sense of belonging and lays importance on the centrality and the contribution of each person to the construction of the group.

Mimosa seeks to create an environment that is diverse and inclusive in all its engagements and to ensure that no member of the school community (current, future or prospective) is discriminated against on the basis of difference.

Diversity: The school understands that diversity can take many different forms including, but not limited to, gender, race, sexual orientation, age, religion, family structure, education, disability, income and language.

Inclusion: Inclusion exists when everyone feels a sense of belonging and all are empowered to participate as full and valued members of the community, shaping and redefining that culture in different ways⁴. We seek to ensure that Mimosa is an inclusive community and is shaping a culture that engage and involve children and families to ensure that there are a myriad of opportunities/languages providing prospects for all to participate and achieve their maximum potential in their unique /preferred ways.

This policy applies to all learners, teachers and staff, parents, guardians, caregivers and any other individual that is a concerned member or considers themselves part of the Mimosa community.

Children's Perspectives on Diversity and Inclusion:

For the purpose of including **the perspectives of Mimosa children** in this document, each learning group constructed a provocation that invited the children to consider and express **what it means to belong and to feel included at Mimosa**. For children, feeling safe and known, and their needs being seen and met, contribute most to their sense of belonging in our community:

'I feel safe around the teachers because they take care of everybody'

'I feel safe in the garden with the plants'

'I come from a home that is very different from everyone else here and I feel belonging to the school because my teacher always knows me better'

'I belong in Mimosa because I have friends to make me happy. And they comfort me when I am sad'

Feeling seen and seeing others are important aspects of **diversity and inclusion**. At Mimosa our children believe that their **unique differences are to be valued and embraced**:

'I think diversity means it is okay to be unique because, that's what makes me, me'

'I have a name specifically chosen for me and it has a meaning behind it'

'Gender is if you wanna be a boy or a girl or both or none '

³ [How Reggio Emilia Encourages Inclusion - ASCD](#)

⁴ [A Primer on Diversity \(carleton.edu\)](#)

'I think race is the way you experience yourself, how you experience others and how others experience you.'

'I have a brown skin mom and white skin dad and I am a mixed-race child'

'I am different because I have autism and I perceive things differently from other people'

'My food is special because I am special. My language is important '

'It's like you making a choice. You make the choice who you want to be. You make the choice where you want to eat. Whatever your head says don't let anybody else make the choice for you'

At Mimosa we aim to create a **safe space for everyone** to come as they are. We do this by:

- 1.1. Striving towards creating a **physical environment** that is functional and accessible to all members of the community
- 1.2. Providing a **secure environment** that ensures that all members of the community can flourish
- 1.3. Creating a **culture** that ensures that all members of the community are respected
- 1.4. Developing a **curriculum** that ensures that all children, teachers and parents can be active participants in the learning process regardless of their difference
- 1.5. Making inclusion a thread that runs through all of the **Mimosa's practices, information and policies**
- 1.6. Ensuring that there is access to appropriate community of ongoing **reflective practice and growth**, for all parents, staff and children that promote a positive understanding of diversity, inclusion and equity
- 1.7. Considering any **issues regarding fees** that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Mimosa, and relieving these barriers wherever possible
- 1.8. Ensuring that educational programs are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework (e.g. Reggio Emilia approach), are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child
- 1.9. Ensuring that the enrolment process is fair and equitable, and facilitates fair access for all children, based on the goodness of fit
- 1.10. Identifying the barriers to participation in service programs and activities, and developing strategies to overcome these barriers
- 1.11. Assist with communication where required and considering the employment of a multilingual and multicultural staff to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse families
- 1.12. Ensuring collaborative relationships with specialised services and professionals to provide support and services for families and children with special needs

No discriminatory behaviour of any sort will be tolerated. This applies in all situations on and off the school grounds where the Mimosa community, current and prospective, interact. Should there be any incidents, suspected or confirmed, these will be addressed through the Mimosa Code of Conduct and disciplinary policy.

Version:	Recommended by:	Approved by:
Version 1	Name: Role: Signature: Date:	Name: Role: Signature: Date
Version 2		